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ABSTRACT

From 1923 until 1956, Jasper Deeter's Hedgerow Theatre provided the United States with true repertory theatre. This document provides a brief history and description of the theatre, noting prominent actors and actresses who belonged to the company, some of the plays that were presented, and recognition that was given to the theatre. The document then describes the recent organization and documentation of the theatre's papers and outlines the contents of the Hedgerow Theatre collection, which include photographs, drawings, speeches and articles by Jasper Deeter, directing notes, correspondence, biographies, scrapbooks, and other materials. The Hedgerow collection will be placed on permanent loan at Boston University's Twentieth Century Archives, and small portions of the collection will be given to other libraries. Current plans call for the organization of remaining materials for use by other theatre libraries and for the production of a documentary film on Hedgerow. The document points out that the Hedgerow collection tells a dramatic story that truly reflects what has happened in the theatre. Theatre historians should preserve, research, and disseminate such materials so that the heritage and the visions of theatre in the United States are transmitted to the young. (GW)

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GAIL COHEN

AMERICA'S REPERTORY - HEDGEROW THEATRE

THE HEDGEROW THEATRE COLLECTION

PRESENTED APRIL 16, 1977 AT THE OHIO STATE UNIV. THEATRE HISTORY CONFERENCE AT CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY, CLEVELAND, OHIO

TO DO RESEARCH IS MORE THAN TO INVESTIGATE THE PAST; IT IS TO DO JUSTICE TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PAST, AND TO MAKE USE OF ITS VISION. HEDGEROW REPERTORY THEATRE IN ONE SENSE ENDED IN 1956, BUT ITS VISION IS STILL WITH US AND TODAY I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE THIS WITH YOU.

FOR THIRTY-THREE YEARS (1923 - 1956), JASPER DEETER'S HEDGEROW THEATRE GAVE AMERICA TRUE REPERTORY. THE HEDGEROW REPERTORY CONTAINED 210 PLAYS. FIFTY WERE WORLD PREMIERES, FOURTEEN WERE AMERICAN PREMIERES, AND TWO PLAYS WERE PRESENTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ENGLISH. A REPERTORY IS IN ITSELF A COLLECTION PRESERVED. THE METHOD OF PRESENTING A DIFFERENT PLAY EACH NIGHT IN THE WEEK KEPT A PLAY ALIVE FOR YEARS. A FEW OF THE MANY PLAYS MADE AVAILABLE OVER THE YEARS TO HEDGEROW AUDIENCES INCLUDE O'NEILL'S THE EMPEROR-JONES GIVEN IN 1923-1926, 1929-1947, AND 1954-1955; BEYOND THE HORIZON 1925, 1928-1939; AND SUSAN GLASPELL'S INHERITORS PERFORMED EVERY YEAR THROUGH 1954 EXCEPT DURING THE WAR.

HEDGEROW WAS UNSUBSIDIZED WITH A THEATRE SEATING ONLY 156. THE ACTORS LIVED COMMUNALLY. THE DEDICATED COMPANY'S AVERAGE MEMBER STAYED SIX YEARS AND SEVERAL STAYED UP TO TWENTY-ONE YEARS OR MORE. THE CASTING FILES LIST OVER SIX-HUNDRED ACTORS. AMONG THEM ARE ANN HARDING, MORRIS CARNOVSKY, EVA LE GALLIENNE, ALEXANDER KIRKLAND, ALLYN JOSLYN, RICHARD BASEHART, VAN HEFLIN, JOHN BEAL, HELEN CRAIG, HARRY BELLAVER, AND SYDNEY WALKER. COUNTLESS MORE WERE TRAINED BY THE FAMOUS HEDGEROW THEATRE SCHOOL. JASPER DEETER ACTED AS WELL AS DIRECTED. EVA LE GALLIENNE AT HEDGEROW IN 1924 SEEING THAT REPERTORY WAS POSSIBLE IN AMERICA WENT ON TO FOUND THE CIVIC REP. PLAYWRIGHTS DEVELOPED INCLUDE

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LYNN RIGGS, AND THE SPEWACKS. WINESBURG, OHIO BY SHERWOOD ANDERSON WAS GIVEN ITS WORLD PREMIERE AS WELL AS JANE BOWLES IN THE SUMMERHOUSE AND COUNTEE CULLEN'S ONE WAY TO HEAVEN. HEDGEROW PRODUCED THE AMERICAN PREMIER OF THE DREISER/PISCATOR AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY, LEONID ANDREYEV'S KING HUNGER WITH SET DESIGN BY MORDECAI GORELIK, AND RODOLFO USIGLI'S THE GREAT GESTURE.

IN 1934 AND 1935, HEDGEROW TOURED AMERICA WITH NINE PLAYS IN REPERTORY. IN 1947, HEDGEROW WAS CHOSEN BY THE STATE DEPT. TO REPRESENT AMERICAN THEATRE OVERSEAS IN A FILM ENTITLED "THE HEDGEROW STORY." THEY PRODUCED EIGHTEEN SHAW PLAYS AND GAVE AMERICA SHAW FESTIVALS FOR SIX YEARS EACH JULY IN HONOR OF SHAW'S BIRTHDAY. MAN AND SUPERMAN WAS PRODUCED AT HEDGEROW IN ITS ENTIRETY. SHAW SAID OF HEDGEROW, "I AM INTERESTED IN THE REPERTORY THEATRES. THAT'S WHERE THE WHOLE THING IS KEPT ALIVE: IN SUCH THEATRES AS THE MALVERN THEATRE, OR IN THE HEDGEROW THEATRE." HENRY MILLER WROTE OF JASPER DEETER AND THE HEDGEROW THEATRE IN HIS BOOK REMEMBER TO REMEMBER. AND IN 1942, SEAN O'CASEY WROTE "LONG LIVE THE ABBEY THEATRE OF DUBLIN! LONG LIVE THE ART THEATRE OF MOSCOW! AND LONG LIVE THE HEDGEROW THEATRE OF MOYLAN, IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA!" THESE ARE A FEW OF THE POPULAR FINDINGS.

IN 1954, JOHN WENTZ OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA DID HIS DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ON HEDGEROW. HE ARRANGED FOR THE THEATRE'S PAPERS TO BE STORED IN THE RARE BOOKS LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA. HOWEVER, THESE WERE NEVER SIGNED OVER TO THE LIBRARY AND REMAINED IN BOXES UNOPENED UNTIL I BEGAN TO ORGANIZE THE MATERIALS OUT OF MY OWN INTEREST TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HEDGEROW THEATRE. DURING THE BI-CENTENNIAL YEAR, I WAS AWARDED A GRANT BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES,

YOUTHGRANT PROGRAM TO ORGANIZE, DOCUMENT AND PRESERVE THESE MATERIALS.

A GREAT TRANSFORMATION HAS TAKEN PLACE FROM THE FIRST DAY I SAW THE COLLECTION OF BOXES PILED TO THE CEILING. IN THESE BOXES WERE TREASURES OF A RICH THEATRE HERITAGE. THE HEDGEROW THEATRE COLLECTION CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING: PHOTOGRAPHS OF OVER 110 PRODUCTIONS, ACTORS IN AND OUT OF CHARACTER, SET, AND HEDGEROW LIFE. THERE ARE WOODCUTS AND DRAWINGS OF THE HEDGEROW THEATRE PRODUCTIONS BY PHILDELPHIA ARTIST WHARTON ESHERICK. THE COLLECTION CONTAINS THE VALUABLE FIND OF OVER FORTY SPEECHES GIVEN BY JASPER DEETER, ARTICLES WRITTEN BY HIM, TRANSCRIPTS OF HIS ACTING CLASSES, DIRECTING CLASSES AND MOST IMPORTANT THE DIRECTING NOTES OF TWENTY HEDGEROW PLAYS.

THE PLAYWRIGHTS AND AGENTS CORRESPONDENCE INCLUDED FORTY-FIVE LETTERS TO JASPER DEETER BY SHERWOOD ANDERSON, CORRESPONDENCE BY SHAW, THE LETTERS OF THEODORE DREISER, PAUL GREEN, LYNN RIGGS, CHRISTOPHER MORLEY, SUSAN GLASPELL, HALLIE FLANAGAN, THE SPEWACKS, ARTHUR MILLER, AND OTHER PLAY-WRIGHTS OF THE HEDGEROW REPERTORY.

THE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE CONTAINS LETTERS FROM BROOKS ATKINSON, ERIC BENTLEY, GILMORE BROWN, THE FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT, THE GROUP THEATRE, FREDERICK MCCONNELL, MARGO JONES, NAZIMOVA, SCOTT NEARING, ABRAM HILL, ANTOINETTE PERRY, ELMER RICE, BETTY SMITH, CLEON THROCKMORTON, HENRY WALLACE, LEOPOLD STOKOVSKI, AND THORNTON WILDER.

THERE ARE BIOGRAPHIES, TIME INTENTS AND EXTENSIVE CORRESPONDENCE FROM ACTORS.

THERE ARE SCRAPBOOKS AND NEWSCLIPS WITH COLLECTIONS ON ANN HARDING, BLACK ACTORS, FEATURES, HEDGEROW ON TOURS, FEATURES ON ACTORS, SHAW AND WORLD WAR II.

A SPECIAL COLLECTION COVERS WORLD WAR II WHEN HEDGEROW ASKED ROOSEVELT TO EXEMPT ITS ACTORS FROM THE DRAFT IN ORDER TO "CONTINUE THEIR FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY AND INTEGRITY IN THE THEATRE." THESE PAPERS ARE ADDRESSED TO THE CONTROVERSY OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THEATRE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND HOW PEOPLE RESPONDED TO CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS.

THE OTHER MATERIALS ARE TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION HERE.

AT THIS DATE, THE MASTER AND OTHER SCRIPTS WITH NOTES REPRESENTING 120 PRODUCTIONS WILL REMAIN AT HEDGEROW FOR USE BY THE CURRENT COMPANY AND SCHOOL HEADED BY HEDGEROVIANS ROSE SCHULMAN AND DOLORES TANNER. THEY WILL BE ADDED TO THE COLLECTION IN THE FUTURE. HUNDREDS OF PART-BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CLASS AND OTHER USE. SOME OF THESE WILL GO TO TEMPLE UNIVERSITY.

THE HEDGEROW MATERIALS HAVE BEEN SORTED AND ORGANIZED BY KIND, SIZE AND SUBJECT. THIS COLLECTION IS STORED ENTIRELY IN ACID-FREE FOLDERS, DOCUMENT CASES AND BOXES. HOPEFULLY, THE COLLECTION WILL BE CATALOGUED ITEM BY ITEM BY THE RECIPIENT LIBRARY. A PROBLEM I ENCOUNTERED WAS THE NATURE OF THE REPERTORY PLAYS BEING PERFORMED MORE THAN ONE YEAR. I CREATED A SEPARATE CATEGORY BY PLAY TITLE. EACH FOLDER INCLUDES PROGRAMS, CAST LISTS, REVIEWS, PRESS STORIES AND OTHER INFORMATION FROM EACH TIME THE PLAY WAS PRESENTED. I HAVE HAD THE UNIQUE ADVANTAGE TO ORGANIZE THIS COLLECTION WHILE THOSE FROM THE HEDGEROW REPERTORY ARE STILL ALIVE

TO CLARIFY DOCUMENTATION. ROSE SCHULMAN ASSISTED ME FROM HER ACUTE MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE HAVING BEEN AT HEDGEROW SINCE 1932. SPIRITUALLY SHE WAS A REMINDER OF THE GREAT STORY BEING PRESERVED. HER CLASSES CARRY ON THE UNIQUE HEDGEROW TRAINING AND THE TEACHINGS OF JASPER DEETER.

UNLIKE OTHER THEATRE COLLECTIONS LIKE THE GROUP THEATRE WHERE THE MATERIALS, IT IS CLAIMED, DO NOT TELL THE REAL STORY OF WHAT TOOK PLACE, I CONTEND THAT HERE IS A COLLECTION WHICH DOES TELL A DRAMATIC STORY WHICH TRULY REFLECTS WHAT HAPPENED. THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF STENOGRAPHER-ACTRESS AUDREY WARD AND OTHERS, WORD FOR WORD NOTES WERE KEPT OF HEDGEROW'S EXTENSIVE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, JOINT COMMITTEE, PERSONAL RELATIONS AND COMPANY MEETINGS. IN THESE, THE DIRECTING NOTES, AND ACTOR'S CORRESPONDENCE THERE IS LIFE. THESE RESOURCES WILL AID ALL THOSE ORGANIZING THEATRES, AND THEY REVEAL THE PROBLEMS, STRUGGLES, PERSONALITY AND HUMANITY OF HEDGEROW THEATRE.

(GRANTS) THE FINDING OF ADDITIONAL MATERIALS IS AN EXTRAORDINARY AND WELCOMED EVENT. AN ADDITIONAL $2000 WOULD HAVE MADE A VAST DIFFERENCE TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE HEDGEROW THEATRE COLLECTION. BUREAUCRACY DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR CARING AND I URGE ALL OF YOU NOT TO DEPEND ON GRANTS WHICH DO NOT ALWAYS UNDERTAKE PROJECTS FULLY. JASPER DEETER KNEW THIS AND WHEN EVERY THEATRE IN PHILADELPHIA WAS DARK, HEDGEROW'S BRIGHT LIGHTS COMMEMORATED ITS 16TH BIRTHDAY. WAYS MUST BE FOUND TO CONTINUE WORK WHICH HAS TO BE DONE IF WE ARE TO BRING A SENSE OF JUSTICE AND DIGNITY TO ALL THOUGHTFUL PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THEATRE.

THE COLLECTION IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR THEATRE EDUCATION. THESE MATERIALS WILL SUPPLY INFORMATION FOR NUMEROUS THESES. THAT THESE PAPERS HAVE NOT BEEN SOUGHT OUT IN THE PAST COMMENTS ON THE LACK OF ATTENTION

GIVEN TO THEATRE ACHIEVEMENT OUTSIDE OF NEW YORK, FOR YEARS TREASURES OF OUR THEATRE HERITAGE HAVE BEEN BEHIND LOCKED DOORS, IN ATTICS, CLOSETS AND BASEMENTS. PROVINCETOWN PAPERS WERE IN ATTICS FOR YEARS AND WITH THE FIRE AT THE WHARF THEATRE WE HAVE LOST YET ANOTHER COLLECTION. THE PAPERS OF THEATRE OF THE LIVING ARTS IN PHILADELPHIA HAVE ALREADY DISAPPEARED, AND THEATRE ATLANTA'S PAPERS WERE SAVED ONLY BECAUSE OF THE CARING OF ONE WOMAN. THERE ARE GREAT STORIES AND KNOWLEDGE TO BE FOUND IN THEATRES SUCH AS THE PROVINCETOWN, CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS, GROUP, FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT AND OTHERS. THESE HAVE GIVEN AMERICA A HISTORY THAT WE SHOULD BE PROUD OF AND IT IS TIME THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC SHARED IN THIS PRIDE.

YOU ARE THE PEOPLE WHO PRESERVE, RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATE THIS HERITAGE AND THESE VISIONS TO THE YOUNG. ROSAMUND GILDER, FORMER EDITOR OF THE THEATRE ARTS MONTHLY MAGAZINE WHICH CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO US ALL TOD ME THAT "THERE IS MORE THEATRE EDUCATION THAN EVER BEFORE. YOU WOULD THINK PEOPLE WOULD KNOW OF HEDGEROW AND AMERICA'S OTHER THEATRES." IT IS UP TO THOSE OF US HERE TO CORRECT THAT SITUATION AND TO CARE THAT THIS INFORMATION MAY REACH OTHERS.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO CONVEY THIS HERITAGE. WE MUST ALL EXTEND OURSELVES OVER AND OVER AGAIN TO ENCOURAGE ABLENESS, ASPIRATION AND THE CAPACITY TO LOOK AT WHAT MIGHT BE, OR AS JASPER DEETER SAID "TO DO WHAT WE CAN ABOUT YOUNG ABILITY, YOUNG HOPE AND YOUNG BELIEF." WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND ARTISTS AND ARE MORE THAN THEATRE HISTORIANS, BUT PARTICIPANTS IN THE MAKING AND ENCOURAGING OF THE THEATRE TODAY.

IN THE PEOPLE I INTERVIEWED WAS THE SPIRIT OF THE WORTH OF THIS PROJECT. I ALSO FOUND IT IN SPEAKING TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO NEVER KNEW THAT TRUE REPERTORY EXISTED IN THIS COUNTRY.

INHERITORS BY SUSAN GLASPELL WAS IN A SENSE HEDGEROW'S BIBLE. SILAS MORTON GAVE AWAY HIS CHOICEST LAND SO THAT A COLLEGE WOULD RISE IN THE IOWA CORN FIELDS TO SAY THAT LEARNING HAS MADE PEOPLE MORE... AND I WOULD LIKE TO QUOTE FROM THE MANIFESTO OF MORTON COLLEGE, "BORN OF THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND THE ASPIRATION TO RICHER LIVING, WE BELIEVE THAT MORTON COLLEGE-RISING AS FROM THE SOIL ITSELF-MAY STRENGTHEN ALL THOSE HERE AND EVERYWHERE WHO FIGHT FOR THE LIFE THERE IS IN FREEDOM, AND MAY, TO THE MEASURE IT CAN, LOOSEN FOR AMERICA THE BEAUTY THAT BREATHES FROM KNOWLEDGE."

ON APRIL 21ST, HEDGEROW CELEBRATES ITS FIFTY-FOURTH BIRTHDAY. IT IS MY GREAT PRIVILEGE TO ANNOUNCE THE HEDGEROW THEATRE PARTNERSHIP DECISION THAT THE HEDGEROW THEATRE COLLECTION WILL BE PLACED ON PERMANENT LOAN AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY'S TWENTIETH CENTURY ARCHIVES. HEDGEROW APPROPRIATELY WILL BE INCLUDED IN THIS LIVING COLLECTION ALONG WITH OTHER DISTINGUISHED PAPERS TO PRESERVE NOTABLE THEATRE ACHIEVEMENT IN THIS ERA. THESE MATERIALS ARE COLLECTED TO BE USED AND ALL THOSE WHO WISH TO KNOW ARE WELCOME TO UTILIZE THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ARCHIVES. A SMALL COLLECTION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AND ADDITIONAL MATERIALS WILL GO TO THE PHILADELPHIA FREE LIBRARY THEATRE COLLECTION AND LINCOLN CENTER. CURRENT GRANT PROPOSALS INCLUDE ORGANIZING REMAINING MATERIALS AND MICROFILING NEWSCLIPS, JASPER DEETER'S SPEECHES AND DIRECTING NOTES. HOPEFULLY, THESE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ALL THEATRE LIBRARIES IN AMERICA AND OVERSEAS. PLANS ARE ALSO BEING MADE FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILM TO BE MADE ON HEDGEROW.

THE HEDGEROW THEATRE COLLECTION TELLS NOT ONLY THE STORY OF HEDGEROW AS A THEATRE. IT IS THE STORY OF REPERTORY - OF THE ONLY TRUE ENDURING AMERICAN REPERTORY. THE COLLECTION REVEALS THE STRUGGLES OF ARTISTS IN THIS COUNTRY, AND THE WORK UNDERTAKEN TO CREATE. THE HEDGEROW THEATRE COLLECTION IS A PROFOUND COLLECTION ON DEMOCRACY; COMMUNITY LIVING, SOCIAL ISSUES AND AMERICAN HISTORY. THE HEDGEROW THEATRE COLLECTION WILL ALLOW PEOPLE OF TODAY AND THE FUTURE TO SEE AND MAKE USE OF THE VISION REPRESENTED. THE REPERTORY TELLS THE STORY OF A THEATRE WHICH HAS PROVIDED NOT ONLY ENTERTAINMENT, IN THE SENSE OF AMUSEMENT, BUT OF A THEATRE THAT HAS INCREASED KNOWLEDGE, STIMULATED PERCEPTION, AND NOURISHED ASPIRATIONS. IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO ORGANIZE THE HEDGEROW THEATRE COLLECTION.